CHAPTER TWO
ALTERNATIVES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 describes four alternative strategies to accomplish off road vehicle designations in the western Mojave Desert. The four alternatives include the following:

?? **Alternative A: Proposed Action.** This alternative presents a motorized vehicle access network that is composed in part of the existing BLM route designations in the western Mojave Desert, and in part of a revised network within desert tortoise critical habitat, and other locations having sensitive resource values.
?? **Alternative B: Enhanced Ecosystem Protection.** This alternative places a high priority on the conservation of sensitive plants and animals, even if adoption of those recommendations would limit motorized vehicle access to and multiple use of the western Mojave Desert.
?? **Alternative C: Enhanced Recreation Opportunities.** This alternative places a priority on providing a high degree of recreation access to the western Mojave Desert.
?? **Alternative D: No Action.** This alternative would retain BLM's existing motorized vehicle access network, which would be incorporated into the CDCA Plan.

Alternative A is discussed first and in depth. The description of each of the other alternatives incorporates the Alternative A discussion by reference; only those components that differ from Alternative A are presented.

2.2 ALTERNATIVE A: PROPOSED ACTION

2.2.1 Background

The Western Mojave Desert Off Road Vehicle Designation Project would designate routes on public lands managed by the BLM as open or closed to motorized vehicle access, or as open on a limited basis. This designation of motorized routes is a requirement of federal regulation, BLM policy and the BLM's CDCA Plan, and is one of the recommendations of the USFWS Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan. Two steps are involved in this process: (1) the designation of routes as open, closed or limited, and (2) amendment of the CDCA Plan to incorporate the network of open and limited routes as a component of the CDCA Plan.

Since 1980, when the CDCA Plan was adopted, BLM completed the first step of the process: the designation of motorized vehicle routes on public lands within the planning area. The most far -reaching designation effort took place between 1985 and 1987, and encompassed most of the western Mojave Desert. Other significant efforts to designate motorized routes occurred both before and after the 1985-1987 effort as part of various planning efforts, primarily in connection with the preparation of ACEC plans, and in the late 1990s during a "pilot"

designation process for the Ord Mountain region[1]. The second step – amendment of the CDCA Plan – has not yet occurred.

The Designation Project builds upon those earlier efforts. It updates the previous route designation efforts, taking into account new or significant planning issues (e.g. the need for a "second look" at the route network within desert tortoise critical habitat; the existing route network was designated before the tortoise was listed as threatened in 1990). It also ensures that all of the many designation efforts undertaken since 1980 complement each other and, collectively, form a seamless route network.

This discussion of the BLM's proposed motorized vehicle access network is organized as follows:

- ?? Criteria
- ?? Methodology
- ?? El Paso Collaborative Access Planning Area
- ?? California Back Country Discovery Trail
- ?? Implementation
- ?? Modification of Route Network

2.2.2 Criteria

The planning team endeavored to develop a route designation process that would employ the successful aspects of past efforts, avoid their pitfalls and involve the public extensively in its development. Consultation with the architects of past designation efforts, other land use planners and extensive conversations and meetings with the public identified a number of issues and concerns that needed to be addressed if a designation process was to be successful. As a result, it was decided to base route designation decisions on the following:

- ?? A variety of data, including biological, cultural, and recreational resources, commercial uses and land ownership.

- ?? Current ground-truthed maps that displayed not only route location, but also route type, use level, and recreational points of interest such as campsites and staging areas.

- ?? A process that
  - ?? Is standardized, repeatable and that can be logically followed.
  - ?? Assesses each route on its own merits and issues, and documents that assessment.
  - ?? Identifies desired future condition and implements a process to attain that condition.
  - ?? Creates a system of routes that work together in positive synergy.

1 In addition, in 2001, as stipulated by court order, BLM implemented route closures within the Fremont, Kramer, Red Mountain, Newberry/Rodman and Superior subregions. These closures were to remain in effect until the issuance of a record of decision for the West Mojave Plan, currently scheduled to be signed in February 2004.

- ?? Systematically assesses both individually and cumulatively the effects of each route on biological, cultural and recreational resources, as well as the general access requirements of commercial and private property interests.
- ?? Establishes a clear link between the route designation decision and the rationale for that decision.
- ?? Involves the public and clearly incorporates their input.
- ?? Considers the history of use, public safety, the intensity and season of use and the effect of concentrating versus dispersing use.
- ?? Takes into account the variety of recreational visitors by offering a variety of routes (e.g. 4WD vs. motorcycle).
- ?? Considers the length of the typical visitor's stay by providing enough recreational opportunity for that stay (which would decrease route proliferation).
- ?? Protects or maintains "feeder" and historic routes, as well as commercial and private property access.

The process should consider: (1) the level of impact of each route; (2) the number, density and intensity of use of each route and its relationship to habitat fragmentation and cumulative effects; and (3) ways to minimize the number and intensity of conflicting land uses (e.g. urban interface, noise, dust, visual impacts).

Recognizing and attempting to address the issues and concerns raised by the public represents only one, albeit very important, aspect to be considered in the development of a route designation process. A second aspect included compliance with statutory guidelines. An abbreviated summary of the primary legal requirements and their most important criteria relative to route designation is presented in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1
Statutory Route Designation Criteria

STATUTE	PRINCIPAL GUIDING CRITERIA AFFECTING MOTORIZED ACCESS
FESA	-Section 7 requires that the plan (i.e. "action") include steps to assist in the "recovery" of the federally threatened or endangered species.
NEPA	- Fully disclose to the public the purpose, the full range of issues and considerations (including environmental) and details of the proposed action and a reasonable range of alternatives. -Carefully evaluate the cumulative effects of the proposed action. Such an analysis is to include: both the current situation, as well as the foreseeable future; evaluate both direct and indirect impacts both within the geographical borders of the action, as well as beyond and; include as part of its cumulative impact analysis not only an evaluation of biological and cultural factors, but also include an evaluation of economic and sociological factors (including recreation).
FLMPA	-Manage public lands on the basis of multiple use and sustained yield ; -resource values to be protected; -certain lands are to be preserved in their natural condition; -wild, as well as domestic habitat is to be provided for; -provide for a balanced and diverse combination of recreational uses; -provide for human occupancy and use -provide for economic uses (e.g. range, timber, minerals).

National Historic Preservation Act	-Protect identified significant cultural sites; -Confer with Native American Nations on project or action (i.e. Nation to Nation conference)
Code of Federal Regulations 43 CFR 8342.1	-trails shall be located in a manner to minimize impacts to the physical resources (i.e. soils, watershed, vegetation, air and other resources) and to prevent impairment of wilderness suitability; -trails shall be located to minimize harassment of wildlife or significant disruption of wildlife habitats. Special attention would be given to protect endangered or threatened species and their habitats; -trails shall be located to minimize conflicts between off-road vehicle use and other existing or proposed recreational uses of the same neighboring public lands, and to ensure the compatibility of such uses with existing conditions in populated areas, taking into account noise and other factors.
Taylor Grazing Act Mining Acts	-Guarantee the conditional issuance of permits allowing the use of public lands for livestock grazing and mining.
State Fish & Game Codes	-Establishes requirements protecting nesting birds of prey, particularly with respect to governing allowable levels of disturbance; -Establishes requirements protecting riparian habitat, particularly with respect to governing allowable levels of disturbance.

A third principal aspect of a successful designation process is the inclusion of steps to ensure that the eventual system or network of routes helps significantly in achieving the desired future condition.

The final principal aspect is the inclusion of steps that carefully consider area specific planning issues and challenges, and then carefully weighs how management protocols designed to remedy those issues can best be implemented.

Landscape Factors: There are many factors that go into deciding which existing vehicle routes should be designated as open. The final designated route network needs to provide for the needs of public land users as much as possible while also minimizing potential vehicle use impacts. Routes that are retained as open are those that provide the best public access through public lands, routes that provide access to significant points of interest and those that have inherit value for recreational driving (i.e. a challenging 4-WD road through a scenic area).

The topography of the west Mojave region varies greatly from sandy bajadas to rugged rock mountains. The process of inventorying routes of travel revealed several observations that offer insight into the management of vehicle travel in the desert. Generally, it was found that there was a higher density of routes in areas with topography than those without it. In flat bajada areas, routes were generally long and straight, leading from one destination to another, often from one set of hills to another. Routes traversing through hills and mountains tended to be shorter and windier. Routes in hills and mountains typically either circumnavigate the hills, wind their way to the top of the mountains for a view, or go to some destination such as a spring in a canyon, a mine, or a cabin. In some cases, the routes are there only to provide a challenging recreational opportunity. The mountains and hills also provide shelter; therefore, campsites were more prevalent where there was topography.

The development of the route network utilized these observations to provide access to

recreation destinations and opportunities while eliminating superfluous routes that did not add to the network by providing necessary access or opportunities.

2.2.3 Route Designation Methodology

Given the enormity of the task of designating all motorized routes in the western Mojave Desert, the region was divided into manageable and recognizable route designation planning units. These included twenty "subregions[2]" (see Appendix B), as well as the numerous ACECs for which designations have been completed, the Ord Mountain Pilot Area, and subdivisions of the remaining areas covered by the1985-87 designation effort (see Table 2-2, Map 1 and Maps on attached CD Rom). Each of the previous route designation efforts was assessed to determine its need for updating to ensure that its routes meshed smoothly with the network designated on adjacent lands.

Table 2-2
Route Designation Planning Units

SUBREGIONS	OTHER PLANNING UNITS
Bighorn	Afton Canyon ACEC
Coyote	Amboy Crater National Natural Landmark ACEC
East Sierra	Barstow Woolly Sunflower ACEC
El Mirage	Bedrock Spring ACEC
El Paso	Big Morongo Canyon ACEC
Fremont	Black Mountain ACEC
Granite	Calico Mountain Early Man Site ACEC
Juniper	Christmas Canyon ACEC
Kramer	Cronese Basin ACEC
Middle Knob	Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area ACEC
Morongo	Fossil Falls ACEC
Newberry-Rodman	Great Falls Basin ACEC
North Searles	Harper Dry Lake ACEC
Ord	Jawbone/Butterbread ACEC
Pinto	Juniper Flats ACEC
Ridgecrest	Last Chance Canyon ACEC
Red Mountain	Manix ACEC
Sleeping Beauty	Mojave Fishhook ACEC
South Searles	Rainbow Basin/Owl Canyon ACEC
Superior	Red Mountain Spring (formerly Squaw Spring) ACEC
	Rodman Mountains Cultural Area ACEC
	Rose Spring ACEC
	Sand Canyon ACEC
	Short Canyon ACEC
	Soggy Dry Lake ACEC
	Steam Well ACEC
	Trona Pinnacles ACEC
	Upper Johnson Valley ACEC
	Western Rand Mountains ACEC

2 A twenty-first subregion, Amboy, encompassing a narrow slice of land located just east of the Marine Corps' Air Ground combat Center at Twentynine Palms, is administered by BLM's Needles Field Office being designated through a Needles Field Office off road vehicle designation process.

	Whitewater Canyon ACEC 1985-87 Inyo County 1985-87 Cady Mountains

2002 Off Road Vehicle Designations: Based upon various new and significant concerns (e.g. desert tortoise and other sensitive species habitat) eleven of the sub regions were selected for detailed designation updates. These eleven sub regions are (from north to south): Ridgecrest, El Paso, Middle Knob, Red Mountain, Fremont, Kramer, El Mirage, Superior, Coyote, Newberry-Rodman and Juniper. The Red Mountain, Fremont, Kramer, Superior and Newberry-Rodman sub regions were selected because they include a large portion of tortoise critical habitat, and because they are the subregions for which interim networks were established in response to court order. The El Mirage and Coyote sub regions were selected because they too are part of the tortoise critical habitat. The Ridgecrest and El Paso sub regions were primarily selected because of their significant recreational opportunities, proximity to the local community of Ridgecrest, and sensitive cultural resource and ecological values. The Middle Knob sub region was selected because of its biodiversity and Juniper sub region was primarily selected because of the interests expressed by the local equestrian community.

The first step in developing the 2002 route designations was to conduct a detailed field inventory in ten of the eleven subregions[3]. This inventory took place between September 2001 and March 2002. Approximately 4,400 miles of motorized routes were inventoried on public lands during this effort. By utilizing sophisticated Trimble Pro XRS Global Positioning System (GPS) units, motorized routes were mapped for location to within sub-five meter accuracy. Coincident with the mapping of the routes, information was collected on the type of route (e.g. two-track versus single-track), route condition (e.g. graded vs. rough) and estimated level of use (based upon woody vegetative cover, e.g. low-intermediate to high use). Additionally, the field data protocol was designed to allow for the collection and storage of information about various points encountered along the route (e.g. campsites, staging areas, mine claims, utility facilities). This data collected by this field effort was downloaded into Geographic Information System (GIS) database where it could be integrated with other GIS coverages (e.g. desert tortoise data) to construct the maps that were then utilized as part of the route designation process.

Once the field data was collected, designation teams began the work of identifying a revised network of open, closed and limited routes within the eleven subregions. Each subregion was divided into Motorized Access Zones (MAZ). These MAZs typically reflected areas with similar management issues or constraints. The precise boundary of each MAZ was usually delineated by significant routes of travel, highways, ACEC boundaries, environmental polygons of concern or topographical constraints.

3 The Juniper sub region was not subjected to a detailed field inventory due to time constraints and the availability of route inventory data that adequately met the needs of the more detailed designation update.

Insert Map 1 Here

Management issues and goals were identified for each MAZ. Whenever possible, areas with similar management goals or issues were delineated as one MAZ. Issues and goals address both the conservation of sensitive species and public access needs (including recreation, commercial and business concerns) (see Table 2-3 and maps on attached CD Rom).

Table 2-3
Motorized Access Zones
Issues and Goals

SUB-REGION	MAZ	MANAGEMENT ISSUES	GOALS
Coyote	MAZ-1	-Includes a portion of Paradise Valley, an area of greater than average tortoise sign. -Dispersed commercial mining interests.	-Facilitate tortoise recovery, giving special attention to lands in Paradise Valley and lands to the west and north of Coyote Lake. -Maintain access to active mine sites.
Coyote	MAZ-2	-Recognize historical use of Manix tank route.	-Maintain access via the Manix tank route.
Coyote	MAZ-3	-Commercial mining interests.	-Maintain access to Alvord mine & other active claims.
Coyote	MAZ-4	-Active cattle allotment.	-Allow routes for the maintenance of the ranching operation and its facilities.
Coyote	ALL	-Dispersed private property. -Many non-competitive organized OHV events. -Communication & electrical transmission tower sites throughout region. - CBDT System planned through the sub-region. -Sub region is part of Desert Tortoise critical habitat.	-Provide adequate private property access. -Maintain adequate route network for continuation of special events. -Provide adequate, non-redundant access for maintenance of numerous utility sites. -Allow for connectivity of the CBDT system through this sub region. -Facilitate desert tortoise recovery: eliminate redundant routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met.
El Mirage	MAZ-1	-Shadow Mtn's south side motorcycle routes create noise and visual impacts to the community of Shadow Mtn. -Shadow Mtn private property owner conflicts with off-road MC use. -Shadow Mtn communication towers.	-Close redundant routes, particularly those that are impacting community of Shadow Mtn. - Allow recreational opportunity while minimizing land use conflicts. -Provide adequate access for maintenance of communication towers
El Mirage	MAZ-2	-Edwards Bowl Management Plan Issues	- Address issues in the Edwards Bowl Plan to the extent possible.

El Mirage	ALL	-Area of occupied private lands known to have conflict with MC use. -Dispersed private property checker-boarded with BLM lands. -Tortoise critical habitat: significant areas of greater than average tortoise sign. -The California Back Country Trail System would cross the sub-region. -Provide for continuation of non-competitive organized OHV events. -Dispersed private property.	-Minimize private land use/ownership conflicts. -Provide adequate private property access. - Facilitate desert tortoise recovery: eliminate redundant routes, particularly those determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in those areas with less desirable desert tortoise habitat. -Allow for connectivity of the CBDT system. -Allow for continuation of events where appropriate (i.e. with particular respect to desert tortoise concerns).
Fremont	MAZ-1	-Zone surrounds Harper Lake ACEC and abuts the southern portion of Black Mountain ACEC. -Part of desert tortoise critical habitat: Zone is location of significant areas of historic and/or current greater than average tortoise sign. Topography is generally with slopes less than 20%, conducive to tortoises but generally not as desirable for many recreational activities. -The CBDT System is planned through the subregion.	-Protect the intent of the ACEC and minimize creation of "volunteer" access routes into the ACEC. - Eliminate redundant routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in the more mountainous terrain found in portions of MAZs 3 and 4. - Allow for connectivity of the CBDT system.
Fremont	MAZ-2	-Includes desert cymopterus populations and CDFG lands set aside for conservation. -Part of desert tortoise critical habitat: Zone is location of significant areas of historic and/or current greater than average tortoise sign. Topography generally consists of slopes of less than 20%, conducive to tortoises but generally not as desirable for many recreational activities.	-Maximize protection for desert cymopterus populations. Minimize fragmentation of its range and maximize the integrity of the CDFG lands. - Eliminate redundant routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in the more mountainous terrain found in portions of MAZs 3 and 4.
Fremont	MAZ-3	- Abuts the western boundary of the Black Mtn. ACEC. - Location of long-term popular use by campers and motorcyclists, much of which is on/around mountainous terrain (i.e. slopes greater than 20%). -The CBDT System is planned through the sub-region.	- Protect the intent of the ACEC and minimize the creation of "volunteer" access routes into the ACECs. - Minimize route redundancy, yet provide enough network connectivity to minimize the creation of "volunteer" routes. - Allow for connectivity of the CBDT.
Fremont	MAZ-4	Zone is the location (e.g. "Hamburger Mill", Gravel Hills) of long-term popular use by campers and motorcyclists, much of which is on/around mountainous terrain (i.e. with slopes greater than 20%).	-Minimize redundancy while providing enough network connectivity to minimize the creation of "volunteer" routes.

Fremont	MAZ-5	-Part of desert tortoise critical habitat: Zone is location of significant areas of historic and/or current greater than average tortoise sign. Topography is generally with slopes less than 20%, conducive to tortoises but generally not as desirable for many recreational activities. -The CBDT System is planned through the sub-region.	-Eliminate redundant routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in the more mountainous terrain found in portions of MAZs 3 and 4. -Allow connectivity of the CBDT system through this sub region.
Fremont	ALL	-Provide for continuation of non-competitive organized OHV events. -Part of desert tortoise critical habitat; significant areas of historic and current greater than average tortoise sign. -Dispersed private property.	-Allow for continuation of events where appropriate (i.e. with particular respect to desert tortoise, desert cymopterus and other species concerns). - Facilitate desert tortoise recovery: Eliminate redundant routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in those areas with less desirable desert tortoise habitat. -Provide adequate private property access and minimize land use conflicts.
Kramer	MAZ-1	-Route proliferation from the adjoining private lands at Silver Lakes. -Part of desert tortoise critical habitat: Zone is location of significant areas of historic and/or current greater than average tortoise sign. Topography is generally with slopes less than 20%, conducive to tortoises but generally not as desirable for many recreational activities.	-Minimize redundancy while providing enough network connectivity to minimize the creation of "volunteer" routes. -Eliminate redundant routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in those areas with less desirable desert tortoise habitat
Kramer	MAZ-2	-Rock hounding and target shooting in the Kramer Hills -Part of desert tortoise critical habitat: Zone is location of significant areas of historic and/or current greater than average tortoise sign. -The CBDT System is planned through the sub-region.	-Allow access to historic rock-hounding areas, and consolidate and minimize the proliferation of shooting areas. -Eliminate redundant routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met -Allow for connectivity of the CBDT system.

Kramer	MAZ-3	-Light use relative to other zones within Kramer. Many of the existing single-track routes created by competitive events in the 1970's before most of those activities were shifted over to the Open Areas. -Location of significant areas of current greater than average tortoise sign. Topography is generally with slopes less than 20%, conducive to tortoises but generally not as desirable for many recreational activities. -The CBDT System is planned through the sub-region.	-Provide adequate private and commercial access and maintain intraregional network connectivity. -Eliminate routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in those areas with less desirable desert tortoise habitat (e.g. portions of the more mountainous terrain found in MAZs 3 and 4). - Allow for connectivity of the CBDT system.
Kramer	MAZ-4	-Varied use, including dispersed camping from neighboring Hinkley into the Iron Mtns. -The CBDT System is planned through the sub-region.	-Provide varied opportunity and network connectivity particularly in those areas of rougher terrain. -Allow for connectivity of the CBDT system.
Kramer	ALL	-Part of desert tortoise critical habitat: Zone is location of significant areas of historic and/or current greater than average tortoise sign. Topography is generally with slopes less than 20%, conducive to tortoises but generally not as desirable for many recreational activities. -Sub region is the location of permitted non-competitive organized OHV events. -Dispersed private property.	- Facilitate desert tortoise recovery: eliminate redundant routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in those areas with less desirable desert tortoise habitat. -Allow for continuation of permitted non-competitive events where appropriate. -Provide adequate private property access and minimize land use conflicts.
Middle Knob		-Pacific Crest Trail passes through area. -Area known forhigh biodiversity. -Location of the very rare Kern buckwheat -Dispersed private property. -Location of significant wind-farm facilities.	-Allow access to the PCT; minimize conflicts with other uses. -Minimize real or potential impacts to sensitive species. -Avoid occupied habitat of Kern buckwheat -Provide adequate private property access and minimize land use conflicts. -Provide adequate access for maintenance of facilities (including fire protection).
Newberry – Rodman	MAZ-1	-Surrounds wilderness area. -Location of numerous golden eagle and prairie falcon nests.	-Provide wilderness access while minimizing motorized wilderness trespass. -Minimize the impact to nesting raptors.
Newberry – Rodman	MAZ-2	-Surrounds wilderness area. -Subject to ranching by permitees.	-Provide wilderness access while minimizing motorized wilderness trespass. -Minimize land-use conflicts (ranching-recreation-resource protection).
Newberry – Rodman	MAZ-3	-The CBDT System is planned through this zone. -Adjoins wilderness area.	-Allow for connectivity of the CBDT system. -Provide wilderness access while minimizing motorized wilderness trespass.

Newberry - Rodman	ALL	-Part of desert tortoise critical habitat. -Rock-hounding opportunity, sightseeing, and dispersed camping. -Dispersed commercial mines and private property.	- Facilitate desert tortoise recovery: eliminate redundant routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in those areas with less desirable desert tortoise habitat. -Allow for the diverse range of recreational opportunities, yet is protective of the resources by eliminating unnecessary and/or redundant routes. -Maintain adequate access to commercial and private properties.
Red Mountain	MAZ-1	-Location of historic popular use by miners, campers, motorcyclists, etc. -Much of this zone is mountainous terrain (i.e. with slopes greater than 20%).	-Minimize redundancy while providing enough network connectivity to minimize the creation of "volunteer" routes. -Recognize that better tortoise habitat is typically found in areas with slopes less than 20%; therefore allow for adequate recreational, commercial, private property access, yet eliminate duplicity in order to minimize impacts to physical, biological and cultural resources (43 CFR 8342.1).
Red Mountain	MAZ-2	-Substantial historic and current commercial mining activity. -Much of this zone is mountainous terrain (i.e. with slopes greater than 20%).	-Minimize redundancy while providing enough network connectivity to minimize the creation of "volunteer" routes. -Recognize that better tortoise habitat is typically found in areas with slopes less than 20%; therefore allow for adequate recreational, commercial, private property access, yet eliminate duplicity in order to minimize impacts to physical, biological and cultural resources (43 CFR 8342.1).
Red Mountain	MAZ-3	-Northwest portion of zone is location of historic popular use by miners, campers, motorcyclists, etc. -Southern portion of zone is location of historic high tortoise sign densities. -Location of Cuddeback Dry Lake, utilized by for commercial photography/filming, sight seeing, OHV recreation.	-Minimize redundancy while providing enough network connectivity to minimize the creation of "volunteer" routes. -Eliminate redundant routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in those areas with less desirable desert tortoise habitat. -Allow adequate access for commercial and recreational interests, but eliminate redundant routes in order to minimize impact to historically important tortoise habitat.

Red Mountain	MAZ-4	-Northeast portion of this zone is mountainous (i.e. with slopes greater than 20%). -Northeast portion of this zone has dispersed occupied private in-holdings. -Zone partially encircles wilderness area.	-Recognize that better tortoise habitat is typically found in areas with slopes less than 20%; therefore allow for adequate recreational, commercial, private property access, yet eliminate duplicity in order to minimize impacts to physical, biological and cultural resources (43 CFR 8342.1). -Allow adequate private property access, yet minimizes land use conflicts. -Provide access to wilderness area in a manner that minimizes motorized incursions.
Red Mountain	ALL	-Part of desert tortoise critical habitat. -Rock-hounding opportunities, sightseeing, and dispersed camping. -Dispersed commercial mines and private property.	- Facilitate desert tortoise recovery: eliminate redundant routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in those areas with less desirable desert tortoise habitat. -Allow for the diverse range of recreational opportunities, yet is protective of the resources by eliminating unnecessary and/or redundant routes. -Maintain adequate access to commercial and private properties.
Superior	MAZ-1	-Significant illegal dumping from the community of Barstow. -Mountainous terrain interspersed with bajadas characterized by higher than average of tortoise sign. -Illegal activities (e.g. “party spots”, “meth” labs) due to proximity to urban areas. -Provides primary access to Rainbow Basin and Owl Canyon.	-Minimize illegal dumping (e.g. close short route spurs that do not serve camping, trailhead or other legitimate opportunities.) -Eliminate redundant routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in those areas with less desirable esert tortoise habitat. -Eliminate isolated loops or spurs that are not otherwise utilized for legitimate recreational or commercial use or private property access -Maintain access to these popular recreation areas (e.g. camping, equestrian, hiking, photography, geologic interpretation) in the most efficient manner possible in order to minimize habitat degradation. .

Superior	MAZ-2	-Zone abuts the northeastern boundary of the Black Mtn. ACEC and eastern boundary of the Black Mtn. wilderness area. -Location of long-term popular use (i.e. just east of the very popular Gravel Hills area in the Fremont subregion) by campers, motorcyclists, etc. much of which is on/around rough terrain (i.e. with slopes greater than 20%). -Mountainous terrain interspersed with bajadas characterized by higher than average of tortoise sign.	-Protect the intent of the ACEC (i.e. to protect its cultural resources) and the wilderness area by minimizing the likelihood of the creation of new "volunteer" routes. -Minimize redundancy while providing enough network connectivity to minimize the creation of "volunteer" routes. -Facilitate tortoise recovery. -Eliminate redundant routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in those areas with less desirable desert tortoise habitat.
Superior	MAZ-3	-Some of highest densities of tortoise sign in the planning area. Topography is generally with slopes less than 20%, conducive to tortoises but generally not as desirable for many recreational activities. -Abuts the eastern boundary of the Black Mtn. ACEC and southeastern boundary of the Black Mtn. wilderness area. -Includes the northwest portion of the North Paradise Conservation Area.	-Eliminate routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in those areas with less desirable desert tortoise habitat. -Protect the intent of the ACEC (i.e. to protect its cultural resources) and the wilderness area by minimizing the likelihood of the creation of new "volunteer" routes. -Minimize redundancy while providing enough network connectivity to minimize the creation of "volunteer" routes. -Provide adequate commercial and private property access. Provide adequate intraregional connectivity in recreational route network in order to minimize the proliferation of "volunteer" routes. Eliminate routes that are redundant and don't meet the above criteria. -Avoid Lane Mountain milkvetch
Superior	MAZ-4	-Northern portion is occupied by Paradise Valley, an area characterized by some of the highest historic and current densities of tortoise sign in the planning area. -Southern portion is characterized by both substantial historic and current commercial mining activity.	-Eliminate routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in those areas with less desirable desert tortoise habitat. -Maintain access to active mines and patented claims.

Superior	MAZ-5	-Includes the eastern portion of the North Paradise Conservation Area. -Eastern portion of this zone is occupied by Paradise Valley, an area characterized by some of the highest historic and current densities of tortoise sign in the planning area.	-Provide adequate commercial and private property access. -Provide adequate intraregional connectivity in recreational route network in order to minimize the proliferation of "volunteer" routes. -Eliminate routes that are redundant and don't meet the above criteria. -Eliminate routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in those areas with less desirable desert tortoise habitat. -Avoid Lane Mountain milkvetch
Superior	ALL	-Sub region is part of desert tortoise critical habitat. -Sub region is known for rock-hounding opportunity, touring of old mines, sight-seeing, and dispersed camping. -Dispersed commercial mines and private property. -Includes portions of the CBDT System. -Location of permitted non-competitive organized OHV events.	- Facilitate desert tortoise recovery: eliminate redundant routes, particularly those that are determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities is determined to already be adequately met or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in those areas with less desirable desert tortoise habitat. -Allow for a diverse range of recreational opportunity, yet be protective of the resources by eliminating unnecessary and/or redundant routes. -Maintain adequate access to commercial and private properties. -Allow for connectivity of the CBDT system through this sub region. -Allow for continuation of permitted non-competitive events where appropriate.

Using 1:24,000 scale maps of each MAZ, the designation team was able to make full use of background data while determining whether a given route should be opened or closed. This data included existing as well as potential environmental concerns that might constrain a route network, such as:

?? T&E and sensitive species and their habitats,
?? Sensitive cultural sites,
?? Highly erosive soils,
?? Private property (to assess access needs as well as potential land use conflicts), and
?? Commercial operations (e.g. ranching, mining and utility sites).

Access needs and other land use data were also mapped, including the following:

?? Route information (e.g. route type, condition and use level),
?? Recreation point data (e.g. campsites, staging areas, viewpoints, rock hounding areas),
?? Topographical and hydrological information (seeps, washes, springs, water tanks)

?? Commercial information (mining sites, claims, debris), utility lines and facilities, ranching facilities (water tanks, out buildings) and land ownership (private, state, military, BLM).

Maps also indicated areas of high biological importance ("biology polygons") and areas of high human disturbance ("disturbance polygons"). The basis for these two mapped units is described below:

?? **Biology Polygons:** These were created using recent field survey data gathered from the tortoise critical habitat. The polygons identify areas where tortoise sign (scat, burrows, live animals) was higher than average. Within biology polygons, special emphasis was to be placed on eliminating routes determined to be unnecessary for commercial or private property access or whose contribution to recreational opportunities was adequately or better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in other areas with either less tortoise sign or habitat of lesser quality.

?? **Disturbance Polygons:** These were also created from recent field survey data. The polygons indicated areas within critical habitat where the amount vehicle-related/dependent disturbance (roads, trails or tracks; dumping; evidence of shooting) was greater than average. Route designation within these polygons was conducted with a goal of reducing vehicle-related disturbance by closing redundant or unnecessary routes. Access would be provided to private property and commercial sites, but only at a level that would meet minimum requirements. Route redundancy was also taken into account, not only for private property and commercial access needs, but also for recreational opportunity. A route was closed if its contribution to recreational opportunities was better met by maintaining recreational opportunities in other areas with either less tortoise sign or habitat of lesser quality.

The next step involved the identification of a motorized vehicle access network using a decision-tree process. BLM staff and management first reviewed each sub region and MAZ. Past, present and future management concerns and issues were considered, including the effect the use of various motorized routes was having on natural resource conservation, the distribution of recreation, types of recreation, resource impacts, law enforcement issues, land use conflicts, mineral development, livestock grazing and maintenance issues. Consideration also focused on changing use patterns and trends, specific problem areas and the effect of routes on adjoining non-BLM lands (e.g. Silver Lakes, El Mirage property owners). Based upon this, the decision tree was applied (see Appendix A).

The decision tree was applied to each of more than 5,200 enumerated vehicle routes within the planning area. For each route, the decision tree poses a series of questions, which fall sequentially into the five following categories: (1) legal easements and rights-of–way; (2) T&E species; (3) other environmental issues; (4) the special qualities of a route, including safety concerns, recreational qualities and user conflict; and (5) route redundancy. The manner in which each question is answered determines which decision tree "limb" or pathway is followed. Footnotes to the tree identify other concerns that need to be taken into consideration as each question is answered. By following a decision tree pathway, the route designator would reach a

recommended designation of "Open" or "Closed". Each answer is alphanumerically coded such that the exact sequence of questions, as well as how they were answered can be recorded for each vehicle route. These codes then enable each recommended decision to be easily entered into a database for future use and analysis. The result was a systematic, documented and repeatable framework for the evaluation of each route.

Appendix C includes a table that summarizes the reasons why each of the enumerated routes that were considered during the 2002 off road vehicle designations was recommended as open or closed.

Revision of 1985-87 and ACEC Off Road Vehicle Designations: Those portions of the existing motorized vehicle access network that were not included in the 2002 route designations were reviewed to ensure that they were compatible with the conservation strategy being developed by the West Mojave Plan and were in compliance with federal regulations (specifically, 43 CFR 8342). In some cases, minor adjustments were necessary, based upon available new information (resource, law enforcement, land use or recreation concerns). This arose, in part, due to the comparatively incomplete nature of the field survey conducted for the 1985-87 network, which lacked modern GPS equipment (not in existence in the mid-1980s) and which did not include most technical 4WD and motorcycle routes. Some examples of this updating information follow:

?? *North Searles Sub Region:* Route designations were updated to take into consideration changing visitor use patterns. To allow loop tours of the area by day users (e.g. picnickers), some new short routes were added. The addition of these short routes is intended to minimize some route proliferation through sensitive resources that is occurring as a result of the public's effort to create looping opportunities.

?? *El Mirage Sub Region:* Route designations were altered to address land use conflicts between private property owners and public recreationists on BLM lands. A few routes that were designated open as part of the Edwards Bowl Plan were closed because of the manner in which they might inadvertently direct the public onto adjoining private lands. In order to maintain the looping touring recreation opportunities provided by those closed routes, other routes that had been designated closed by the Edwards Bowl Plan were opened. The net effect of these changes should be decreased conflicts between the private property owners and the public recreating on BLM lands. This action was carried out in accordance with 43 CFR 8342.1(3): *Areas and trails shall be located to minimize conflicts between off-road vehicle use and other existing or proposed recreational uses of the same or neighboring public lands, and to ensure the compatibility of such uses with existing conditions in populated areas, taking into account noise and other factors.*

?? *El Mirage Sub Region:* Route designations were altered to address new information regarding desert tortoise distribution. Specifically, those routes in areas of higher than average tortoise sign that were located on bajadas and that did not provide necessary access to private property or commercial interests (e.g. active mines) or that did not serve as intra- or inter- regional connectors for recreational opportunity were designated closed.

However, those non-redundant routes above the bajadas, generally on slopes greater than 20% were designated open to provide greater recreational opportunity (e.g. on the northern and eastern shoulders of the Shadow Mountain complex).

?? *Black Mountain ACEC:* Route designations were altered to reflect new route information gathered during the 2001 field inventory of the adjoining Fremont and Superior sub regions. Along the mountainous western boundary of this ACEC a few routes previously designated closed were re-designated as open. These minor alterations would create a route system or "network" that would have fewer dead-ends and greater inter connectivity between routes (e.g. more looping route opportunities). This part of the Fremont sub region is a very popular recreation area with a higher probability of route proliferation and incursions into sensitive areas (in this case cultural). Past experience has shown that by providing route systems that are interesting, challenging and logical as networks, compliance level can be substantially increased. These changes should result in greater compliance in spite of the increased use that this area is experiencing.

?? *Edge-matching Designation Boundaries:* At twenty-five locations, the ACEC, 1985-87 and 2002 networks bounded each other. It was necessary to adjust the location of some routes at the borders to ensure that these networks, developed at different times and based upon differing field information, would constitute a single seamless and consistent motorized vehicle access network. This effort took into account the latest information concerning recreation uses and patterns, as well as new resource concerns (e.g. recently listed T&E species).

Maps of the Proposed Off Road Vehicle Designations: Appendix C includes a CD-Rom on which are maps of the proposed West Mojave Off Road Vehicle Designations, including the 2002 designations, the remaining 1985-87 network and the ACEC off-road vehicle designations, as well as the existing route network (see below, Alternative D, No Action).

2.2.4 El Paso Collaborative Access Planning Area

The public lands within the El Paso Mountains and Ridgecrest subregions possess many unique recreational attractions, and are located immediately adjacent to the City of Ridgecrest. As a result, these two subregions are very popular with the recreating public. Opportunities to encourage the growth of eco-tourism, special OHV events and commercial filming in this area could benefit the local economy. These two subregions also possess many sensitive and important natural and cultural features, including a National Register District and habitat for the state-listed Mohave ground squirrel and other sensitive species. Finally, there are a number of private access needs that need to be addressed, including private parcels, commercial operations (such as quarries), and permitted facilities (guzzlers, water tanks, stock ponds and communications sites). Due to all of these factors, local community interest in the nature of the motorized access to be provided is very high.

The Designation Project would establish an El Paso Collaborative Access Planning Area (El Paso CAPA) for the El Paso Mountains and Ridgecrest subregions. A motorized vehicle access network would be designed for the El Paso CAPA through the collaboration of the BLM with local jurisdictions (including the City of Ridgecrest and the County of Kern) and the general public. The intent is to adopt this network as a component of the CDCA Plan by no later than December 31, 2005.

The process would be conducted subject to certain biological and cultural resource criteria that would assure that the routes to be designated as open, closed, or limited would follow the principles of species and habitat protection used in the West Mojave Plan. These "sideboards" to the process are listed below:

?? Adequate protection of raptor nests, particularly golden eagle and prairie falcon;

?? Adequate protection of the Red Rock poppy and Red Rock tarplant, two species endemic to the El Paso Mountains;

?? Limitation of vehicle access to wildlife springs and artificial water sources "guzzlers;" and

?? Protection of riparian habitat adjoining significant roosts for Townsend's big-eared bat (if any roost sites are located).

?? Full compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, and the cultural resources element of the California Desert Conservation Area Plan.

?? Protection of significant cultural resources, including those listed in the National Register of Historic Places or within the boundaries of the Last Chance Canyon National Register District and Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

?? Protection of unevaluated cultural resources until their significance has been determined through formal evaluation.

?? Protection of the cultural landscape within the El Paso Mountains;

?? Protection of significant fossil-bearing units within the El Paso Mountains.

The Designation Project's Record of Decision would amend the CDCA Plan to incorporate the existing 1985-87 network for the El Paso Mountains and Ridgecrest subregions, pending the completion of the collaborative planning effort.

A timeline for completing the El Paso CAPA process follows:

?? June 30, 2003: Designation Project Record of Decision signed, amending CDCA Plan and adopting the existing 1985-87 network for the El Paso Mountains and Ridgecrest

subregions.

?? December 31, 2004: Revised motorized vehicle access network developed through the El Paso CAPA process for the El Paso Mountains and Ridgecrest subregions.

?? December 31, 2005: Subsequent NEPA analysis completed and Record of Decision signed, amending CDCA Plan to adopt the network developed through the El Paso CAPA process.

2.2.5 California Back Country Discovery Trail

Certain segments of the open route network would be nominated for inclusion by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division (OHMVRD) as part of the California Back Country Discovery Trail (CBDT), a part of the California Statewide Motorized Trail System. The CBDT is a system of existing motorized routes that when formally designated would offer long distinct backcountry touring opportunities from Mexico to Oregon and throughout the state of California. Utilizing an OHVMRD grant, the BLM California Desert District commissioned a study that identified a proposed system of routes for inclusion as part of the CBDT. That proposed system of routes would be included as a component of the CDCA Plan by the Designation Project.

2.2.6 Implementation

Past experience in the West Mojave has generally shown that the most effective signing protocol (i.e. greatest public compliance) is one in which the routes designated open would be signed. Closed routes would not be signed and would either be reclaimed naturally or vertically mulched. Due to monetary and staffing constraints, as well as the remoteness of much of the West Mojave region, most of the routes designated closed would be left to natural reclamation. In those areas where environmental concerns are more profound (e.g. in areas where the amount of tortoise sign is above average or within the desert tortoise biology polygons) or where the intensity of use is such that it is necessitated, vertical mulching to the line-of-sight would be favored over natural reclamation.

Each BLM Field Office would prioritize the areas (e.g. sub regions, MAZs) and the routes to be addressed first. The range of actions and their intensity would vary based upon a number of factors (assessed need, available resources) and could include law enforcement, various forms of public education and other means, as well as signing and vertical mulching. A BLM Field Office might choose to involve the public as it prioritized these efforts and could employ options like those discussed below for monitoring route needs or prioritizing the maintenance of routes.

Discussions regarding route implementation and maintenance often prematurely place too much emphasis on route rehabilitation. Although rehabilitation has its place in the set of “tools” available to a field maintenance crew, it should only be undertaken after other route maintenance options have been exhausted. Delaying rehabilitation of routes in favor of more proactive maintenance steps is necessary if a field maintenance team is to successfully avoid the pitfalls of engaging in a program (such as rehabilitation) that can quickly become a “black hole” for scarce

personnel and resources (e.g. heavy equipment, plant material). Placing premature emphasis on rehabilitation often creates its own set of new larger logistical problems, reducing if not eliminating any chance of successful implementation. Although the rehabilitation of routes would always remain an option, due to the requirements of extensive commitments of staff and resources it should not be called upon until other more proactive means of route maintenance are exhausted.

The implementation of the route system and its maintenance would begin with a first phase consisting of route management actions such as:

?? Open route signing.
?? Open route maintenance, with an emphasis on making the open network of routes more obvious and attractive to use than the closed routes. Existing park ranger and maintenance staff would do this during route signing and sign maintenance.
?? Hand raking and disguise of prominent closed routes, including lining small rocks across closed routes to help discourage use.

Route rehabilitation work would begin only as a second phase on those routes where the first phase not proven to be successful or where route conditions were clearly beyond the capability of the first phase to address. Although rehabilitation is recognized as a second phase, planning for this phase, including the securing of funding, should begin early. Having route designations in place would enhance the availability of funds, and would allow the BLM to pursue external sources of rehabilitation funding such as OHMVR, the National Fish and Wildlife Habitat Fund (USFWS), and contributions of volunteer labor from local, state, and national interest organizations.

Specific prioritization of work areas/sites would be guided by four factors, all of which are related to the location of the route:

?? Factor 1: Are located within tortoise critical habitat,
?? Factor 2: Have above-average tortoise sign or are important to other sensitive species (i.e. located within biology polygons),
?? Factor 3: Have higher than average vehicle disturbance (i.e. located within disturbance polygons) and
?? Factor 4: Have significant urban interface issues.

Examples of areas where all of these factors come into play would include portions of:

?? Kramer sub region west of the community of Silver Lakes;
?? El Mirage sub region east of the Edwards Bowl area and
?? Superior sub region northwest of Barstow.

The highest priority would be given to areas for which all four factors apply. The second priority would be those routes characterized by factors 1-3; the third priority would be routes characterized by factors 1 and 2; fourth priority to routes characterized by factor 1 only; and fifth

priority to remaining routes.

Past experience, such as that obtained through the implementation of the Ord Mountain route designation pilot, can give valuable insight into not only which actions, but in what order they should occur. Implementation of the Ord Mountain Pilot plan revealed that the most effective short-term action taken was an increase in enforcement and visitor service patrolling, which resulted in a commensurate increase in visitor contacts. Through this increased number of contacts visitors realized that BLM was aggressively and successfully implementing the new network. Visitors generally responded to this in one of two ways. Those who were seeking a cross-country driving experience and did not want to be limited to routes gradually moved to the "Open Areas" where they could continue to recreate in a more unrestricted manner. Others continued to recreate in the Ord Mountains, generally staying on open routes.

The least effective short-term action taken in the Ord Mountains was signing the closed route network. Not only did this effort consume a great deal of staff time; in addition, signs were removed almost as quickly as they were put up. The need to resign routes placed additional demands on scarce staff time and material.

Given the lessons learned from the Ord Mountain experience, the successful implementation of a new route network should proceed by carrying out these steps in the following order:

- ?? Pursue funding for signage and the staff necessary to implement the route signing effort (i.e. both law enforcement and maintenance staff).
- ?? Pursue funding for route rehabilitation.
- ?? Sign the open route network (do not sign the closed route network).
- ?? Maintain the open route network with the principal goal being to make the open route network more attractive for use than the closed route network. Make ample use of the tools such as the York Rock Rake to shape, clear and contour the open route network.
- ?? Install informational kiosks and interpretive signing where it would be most effective. Site these facilities where it would reach the greatest number of visitors and where it would target an audience that might be the most receptive to such facilities. For example, in the Kramer sub region such facilities might be most beneficial at major trailheads and campgrounds in the eastern portion of the sub region that are heavily visited by families enjoying camping.
- ?? Develop and publish maps that are up-to-date, readily available and have a readily understandable and useful format. For example, many visitors are familiar with the informational format employed by USGS quadrangle sheets. The Friends of Jawbone have published a map which has proven very popular amongst users to that region and that might serve as a good "for purchase" template. The Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division of California State Parks has produced a series of inexpensive pocket maps for each of its facilities that may serve as a good template for very inexpensive or free maps.
- ?? Regularly maintain signs, kiosks, routes, maps and brochures.

At this point in the new route implementation process, if no new funding for law enforcement has been forthcoming, then all that can be done to obtain voluntary compliance has already taken place. Voluntary compliance would be slow in the beginning, but would increase over time (within the next 2 – 10 years).

At such time as additional funds are available for law enforcement and rehabilitation, the following steps should be taken:

- ?? Begin route rehabilitation in priority areas.
  - o Route rehabilitation would require active maintenance for at least 1 year.
- ?? Initiate enforcement and visitor service patrols with the following caveats:
  - o Do not over-commit; funding must be available to sustain the new patrol for a period of at least 2 years.
  - o As enforcement efforts move into new areas, inappropriate use could migrate back to areas where the program had already been implemented. Address this by allocating more funding to new areas, as there would still be a residual cost to maintain the first (earlier implemented) area.
  - o Keep in mind that it typically takes one year from the date funding becomes available until the time that a new fully delegated ranger is deployed into the field.
  - o Consider that turnover among law enforcement staff is high, which will reduce the efficiency of enforcement efforts both due to vacancies and the need for new training.

Table 2-4 presents an implementation time frame. Table 2-5 lays out the cost of implementation actions.

Table 2-4
Implementation Time Frames

ACTION	COMPLETION TIME	COMMENTS
Pursue funding and FTE for enforcement, visitor services, and maintenance.	Year 3 – Ongoing	BLM works on a three-year budget cycle. There may be some infusion earlier.
Pursue funding for route rehabilitation.	Year 2 – Ongoing	This would likely come from both federal appropriations and external sources. Someone should be given this as a task.
Sign open route network.	Year 1- Ongoing	Assumes funding in year 1
Maintain open route network.	Year 1- Ongoing	Assumes funding in year 1
Install informational kiosks and interpretive signing.	Year 1- Ongoing	Assumes funding in year 1
Develop and publish maps and brochures.	Year 1- Ongoing	Assumes funding in year 1
Routinely maintain signs, kiosks, routes, maps, and brochures.	Year 2- Ongoing	Assumes ongoing funding

Table 2-5
Implementation Costs

ACTION	COST	PRIORITY
Pursue funding and FTEs for enforcement, visitor services, and maintenance.	$100,000 annually per Law Enforcement Officer w/vehicle X 5 $75,000 annually per Visitor Service Staffer w/Vehicle X 5 $75,000 annually per Maintenance Staffter. w/ Vehicle X 5 Total Annual funding needed: $1,2500,000	1
Pursue funding for route rehabilitation.	$100,000 annually	1
Sign open route network.	$10,000 one time cost	2
Maintain open route network.	Included in staff cost	2
Install informational kiosks and interpretive signing.	$50,000 one time cost	1
Develop and publish maps and brochures.	$20,000 one time cost	2
Routinely maintain signs, kiosks, routes, maps, and brochures.	$30,000 annually	2

2.2.7 Modification of Route Network

The Designation Project Record of Decision would amend the CDCA Plan to adopt the motorized vehicle access network as a component of that Plan. Any significant future modifications of the network, therefore, could only occur through an amendment to the CDCA Plan, including full NEPA compliance, public involvement, interagency coordination, and the preparation of a Record of Decision for the amendment.

Minor modifications of the network during plan implementation would be allowed, however, without the necessity of a formal plan amendment. FLPMA allows BLM resource management plans (such as the CDCA Plan) to be "maintained as necessary to reflect minor changes in data" (Section 1610.5-4.) Plan maintenance is limited, in that it cannot result in the expansion of the scope of resource uses or restrictions, or change the terms, conditions and decisions of the approved plan. It is limited to further refining or documenting a previously approved decision incorporated in the plan. In view of these limitations, "minor realignments" of the route network would be considered to be plan maintenance, and could be made without formal amendment of the plan. "Minor realignments" would include the following:

- ?? Minor realignments of a route necessary to avoid cultural resources sites identified during the process of complying with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
- ?? Minor realignments of a route necessary to reduce impact on sensitive species or their habitats.
- ?? Minor realignments of a route that would substantially increase the quality of a recreational experience, but that would not affect sensitive species or their habitat, or any other sensitive resource value.

The term "minor realignment" refers to a change of no more than one linear mile of one designated route. It could include the opening of an existing, but previously closed, route that

serves the same access need as the open route that is to be "realigned". It does not include the construction of a new access route involving new ground disturbance, except where new construction is necessary to avoid a cultural resource site or sensitive species.

Minor realignments must be documented in the official record. The reason for the alignment change shall be recorded and kept on file in the affected BLM Field Office, and the change noted in the CDCA Plan.

Route designation on newly acquired lands would occur every five years (or sooner, if judged to be prudent), would comply with applicable federal regulations and statutes, and be incorporated into the overall route implementation process. New route networks on acquired lands would be required to facilitate conservation programs and be complimentary to the network resulting from alternative implementation.

2.3 ALTERNATIVE B: ENHANCED ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION

Alternative B grew out of discussions among agencies and members of the public during the development of Alternative A. Many suggestions were offered that called for placing a very high priority on the conservation of species and ecosystems, even if adoption of these recommendations would limit human access to and multiple use of the western Mojave Desert. Alternative B incorporates many of these suggestions.

All aspects of this alternative's conservation strategy would be as described for Alternative A, except as specifically described below.

Additional motorized vehicle access restrictions would be imposed in several of the motorized access zones within tortoise critical habitat. Within biologically sensitive MAZ's, only street-legal vehicles (i.e. licensed by the California Department of Motor Vehicles in accordance with the State Vehicular Code as legal for operation on California's public roads and highways) would be permitted. These include street-legal four-wheel drive vehicles and dual-sport motorcycles. Vehicles that are not street-legal but are only eligible for "green sticker" licensing (that is, approved for use off of highways) would be prohibited. These include many types of dune buggies, sand rails, all terrain vehicles, quads and dirt bikes. The restricted MAZ's are listed in Table 2-6.

Table 2-6
Motorized Access Zones
Limited to Street-Legal Vehicles Only

SUBREGION OR SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA	MOTORIZED ACCESS ZONE	REASONS FOR VEHICLE RESTRICTIONS
El Mirage	1,2	Total Corrected Sign for desert tortoise significantly above average; would help to address long-standing private property conflict issues
Kramer	1	Total Corrected Sign for desert tortoise significantly above average; would assist in addressing urban interface issues (i.e. Silver Lakes)
Kramer	2,3,4	Total Corrected Sign for desert tortoise significantly above average
Fremont	1,2,5	Total Corrected Sign for desert tortoise significantly above average
Superior	1	Total Corrected Sign for desert tortoise significantly above average; closure would help address significant law enforcement issues
Superior	3	Total Corrected Sign for desert tortoise significantly above average
Superior	4	Total Corrected Sign for desert tortoise significantly above average; offers protection to Paradise Valley
Superior	5	Total Corrected Sign for desert tortoise significantly above average; offers further protection for the Lane Mountain milkvetch
Newberry Rodman	3	Total Corrected Sign for desert tortoise significantly above average; conflicts with permitted ranching operation
Coyote	1	Total Corrected Sign for desert tortoise significantly above average; offers protection to Paradise Valley
Western Rand ACEC	---	Important tortoise habitat, adjacent to Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area

During periods of prolonged drought (lasting three or more years), the BLM would consider emergency route closures (generally referred to as "quarantine areas") in higher density areas, or identified motorized access zones. Such quarantines would be lifted immediately following break of the drought, which would be identified by the Implementation Team in coordination with BLM, USFWS, and CDFG.

2.6 ALTERNATIVE C: ENHANCED RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Alternative C's conservation strategy, like Alternative B's, grew out of discussions among agencies and members of the public during the development of Alternative A. Many suggestions were offered that called for placing a very high priority on multiple use and motorized vehicle access to the desert, even if this might affect some of the programs that could be implemented to conserve of species and ecosystems.

All aspects of this alternative would be as described for Alternative A, except as specifically described below.

?? Between Highway 395 and the Trona Road, reopen the competitive "C" routes.

?? Establish a Fremont Recreation Area on lands north and west of Fremont Peak, surrounding Cuddeback Dry Lake. Change the BLM multiple use class to Class M within this area. Allow competitive off highway vehicle speed events within this area on designated motorized vehicle routes. Prepare a management plan for this area that emphasizes vehicle access, camping, and competitive event support. A denser network of off highway vehicle routes than that proposed by Alternative A could be established through this planning process in the area close to Cuddeback Dry Lake, following completion of this plan and amendment of the CDCA Plan.

2.8 ALTERNATIVE D: NO ACTION

Off road vehicle designations in the western Mojave Desert would remain unchanged from those already in effect. Motorized vehicle networks developed during the preparation of ACEC management plans since 1980 would provide the network that would apply within those ACECs. These include the following ACECs: Afton Canyon, Barstow Woolly Sunflower, Bedrock Spring, Big Morongo Canyon, Black Mountain, Calico Mountain Early Man Site, Christmas Canyon, Cronese Basin, Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area, Fossil Falls, Great Falls Basin, Harper Dry Lake, Jawbone/ Butterbredt, Juniper Flats, Last Chance Canyon, Mojave Fishhook Cactus, Rainbow Basin/Owl Canyon, Red Mountain Spring (formerly Squaw Spring), Rodman Mountains Cultural Area, Rose Spring, Sand Canyon, Short Canyon, Steam Well, Trona Pinnacles, Western Rand Mountains, and Whitewater Canyon.

In all other areas, the 1985-87 off road vehicle designations would remain in place.

2.9 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED CONSIDERATION

Interim Management Alternative: As a result of a January 2001 consent decree commitment on a settlement agreement arising out of litigation between BLM and the Center for Biological Diversity and others, the BLM was required to "implement an emergency route closure" for the Red Mountain, Fremont, Kramer, Superior and Newberry-Rodman subregions This measure was to remain in effect until the issuance of the West Mojave Plan Record of Decision. BLM implemented this measure by adopting route closures, based upon the preliminary and relatively incomplete information available at that time.

The closures were identified before the field survey work described above was completed, at a time when the route designation planning process was still at a relatively early stage. Prior to March 2002, the results of this field survey were not available to help identify the location of routes of travel on the ground, the nature of those routes (graded, 4WD, single track, level of use), and vehicle destination points (campgrounds, staging areas, popular recreation sites, and other features). The results of the field survey indicate that the design of the resulting access network did not provide for all motorized vehicle access needs, nor for the most effective protection for species of concern.

2.10 OVERVIEW OF ALTERNATIVES

Table 2-7 indicates the mileage of open routes in each alternative. Also presented, where applicable, is the total public land mileage inventoried by field teams in 2001-2, as well as the miles of washes remaining open and closed under Alternative A (figures not available for the 1985-87 network which, not being recorded by GPS, could not be directly compared to the location of washes mapped in 2001-2).

SUBREGION	TOTAL MILES 2001 INVENTORY (PUBLIC LAND)	MILES OPEN			2002 NON-MC OPEN	MILES OF WASHES 2002	
		1985-87	ACEC	2002		OPEN	CLOSED
BIGHORN		218					
COYOTE	411	178		255	255	16	22
EAST SIERRA		109					
EL MIRAGE	267	49		60	59	0	1
EL PASO	465	324					
FREMONT	582	214		372	291	18	15
GRANITE		38					
JUNIPER		108		152	126		
KRAMER	642	254		362	315	11	35
MIDDLE KNOB	91	0		83	82		
MORONGO		18					
NEWBERRY-RODMAN	210	142		171	171	4	12
NORTH SEARLES		99					
ORD	549	38	159*		N/a		
RED MOUNTAIN	733	234		362	313	4	20
RIDGECREST	328	106					
SLEEPING BEAUTY		58					
SOUTH SEARLES		36					
SUPERIOR	668	396		417	417	9	14
INYO COUNTY 1985-87		330					
AFTON CANYON ACEC			26				
BLACK MOUNTAIN ACEC				26			
GREAT FALLS BASIN ACEC			N/a				
JAWBONE BUTTERBREDT ACEC			133	N/a			
RAINBOW BASIN ACEC			30	133			
WESTERN RAND MOUNTAINS ACEC			128				

*Ord mileage is for Ord Pilot Project.
MC = Motorcycle